

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 NEA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SSM-05 /105 W

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R 251542Z FEB 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2205

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

USMISSION GENEVA

UNCLAS ABIDJAN 1963

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, IV, IS, XF

SUBJECT: HOUPHOUET ON MIDDLE EAST CONTACTS

REF: ABIDJAN 1730 (NOTAL)

1. ON HIS RETURN FROM PARIS FEBRUARY 24, GOIC PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET BOIGNY WAS ASKED BY A REPORTER TO COMMENT ON HIS RECENT CONTACTS IN EUROPE WITH MIDDLE EASTERN LEADERS. IN REPLY HOUPHOUET SAID HE HAD RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM PLO LEADER YASSER ARAFAT TRANSMITTED BY A DELEGATION WHICH INCLUDED BOTH PLO REPRESENTATIVES AND MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ISRAELI COUNCIL FOR PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND THE PALESTINIANS, A GROUP HEADED BY ISRAELI GENERAL BAR LEV. HOUPHOUET SAID HE HAD RECEIVED THE DELEGATION FIRST IN GENEVA, THEN IN PARIS, FOLLOWED A FEW DAYS LATER BY THE CALL ON HIM BY ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER RABIN, A VISIT WHICH WAS, SAID HOUPHOUET, AT RABIN'S REQUEST.

2. HOUPHOUET SAID HE IS NOT A NEGOTIATOR ON THE ISSUES, THAT HIS ROLE IS A MODEST ONE OF TRANSMITTING MESSAGES
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BETWEEN THE PARTIES CONCERNED. IT'S UP TO THE PARTIES THEMSELVES TO USE THESE COMMUNICATIONS IN THEIR SEARCH FOR PEACE. HOUPHOUET SAID HE HAS THE IMPRESSION THAT THERE HAS BEEN A FAVORABLE EVOLUTION OF ATTITUDES AND A REAL WILL FOR PEACE NOW EXISTS ALTHOUGH THE PATH TO ACHIEVING IT IS STILL LONG AND DIFFICULT.

3. HOUPHOUET ADDED IT WAS UP TO THE BIG POWERS,
"PARTICULARLY THE AMERICANS", TO BREAK DOWN THE WALL OF
MISTRUST AND CONSTRUCT ON ITS RUINS THE BASIS OF A JUST
AND LASTING PEACE.

4. IVORIANS KNOW THE VALUE OF PEACE, SAID HOUPHOUET,
WHICH IS WHY THE GOIC ALWAYS FAVORS DIALOGUE INSTEAD OF
WAR. HE NOTED THAT IF THE ARABS AND ISRAELIS HAD FOLLOWED
THE WISE COUNSEL OF PRESIDENT BOURGUIBA (TO NEGOTIATE
A SOLUTION) THEY COULD HAVE AVOIDED THE LONG AND DISASTROUS
WAR. NEGOTIATIONS NOW ARE RENDERED MORE DIFFICULT
BY THE EXTREME HATRED AND MISTRUST THAT EXISTS.

5. HOUPHOUET CONCLUDED BY SAYING IT WAS POSSIBLE HE
WOULD MAKE NEW CONTACTS WITH THE INTERESTED PARTIES.
STEARNS

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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